

Henninger rallies to nip McQuaid at buzzer

By Barbara Ann Homick
Staff writer

GLENS FALLS — The McQuaid Jesuit Knights lacked the killer instinct against Syracuse Henninger in the Class A state semifinals last Saturday.

It ended up costing the Knights a chance at the state title.

McQuaid learned the hard way after losing a heartbreaker to Syracuse Henninger (Section 3), 67-65, in the final seconds of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Class A semifinals at the Glens Falls Civic Center on March 16.

Although the Knights (21-3) boasted 10-point leads twice in the third quarter, Henninger eventually crept back and won the game at the buzzer on a jump shot by Gilbert Speights.

The Black Knights (25-1) lost to Mt. Vernon (Section 1, Westchester County area) in the Class A state final, 80-65, on March 17.

McQuaid got off to a good start early on as Ted Naylon began the scoring with a basket 17 seconds into the opening quarter and Jeff Armbrister added two points from the line a minute later.

Although Henninger appeared a little sluggish early in the game, the Black

McQuaid headed into the locker room with an uncomfortable 35-31 lead.

Reese increased the tension on the court when he picked up his fourth foul within the first minute of the third quarter. After Naylon made a layup with 7:05 left, Jay Wandtke jammed home a rebound of a missed shot by Naylon just 20 seconds later.

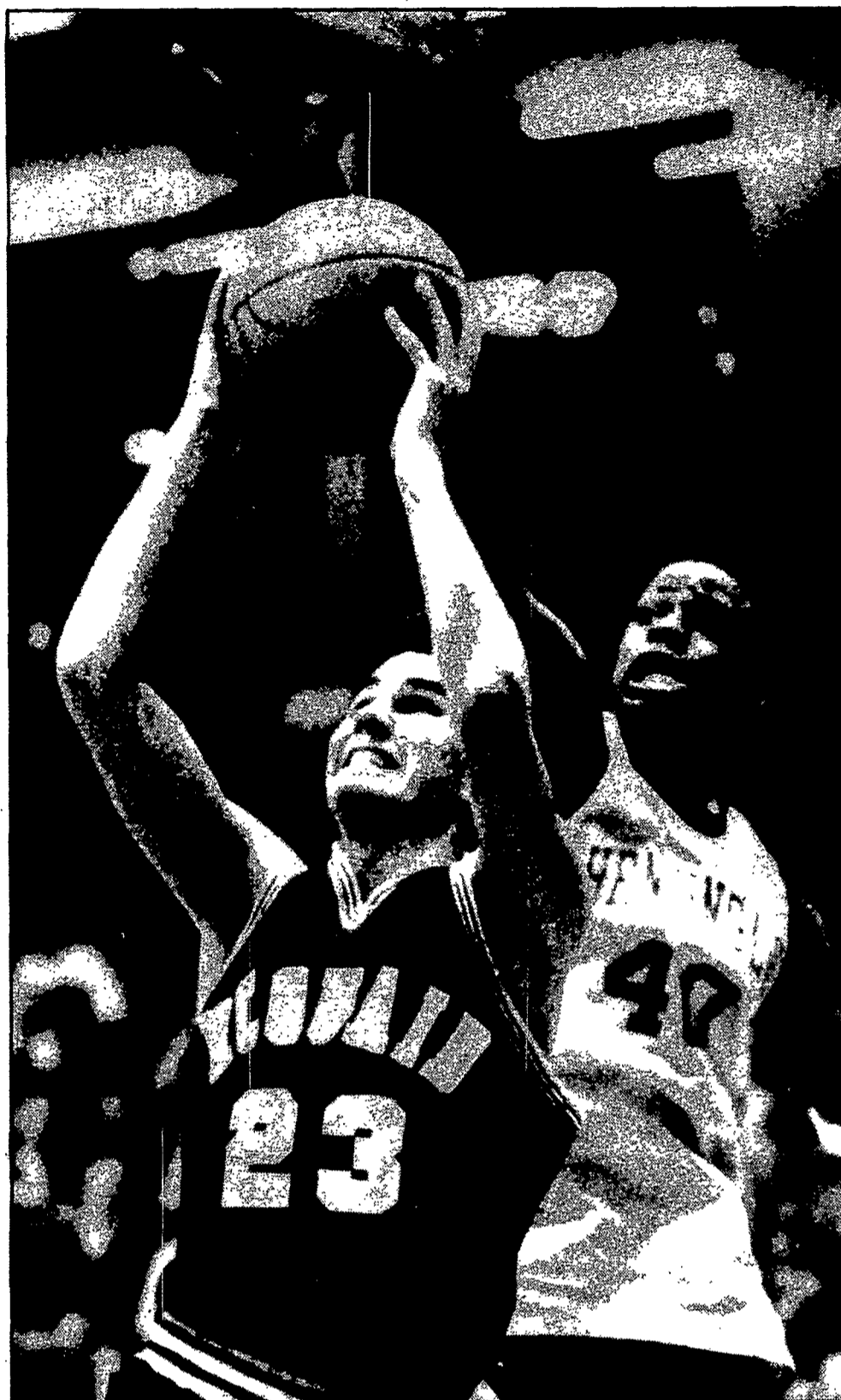
The Knights appeared to be well on their way to a win after Jason McKinney's foul shots and Naylon's break-away basket at 4:25. Montesano then hit both ends of a one-and-one situation to give the soaring Knights a 10-point lead, 46-36, with three minutes to play in the quarter.

After Sims scored to trim the margin to eight points, the Knights again upped the margin to 10 when David Fox came off the bench for McKinney and banked a shot at 2:42 to make the score 48-38.

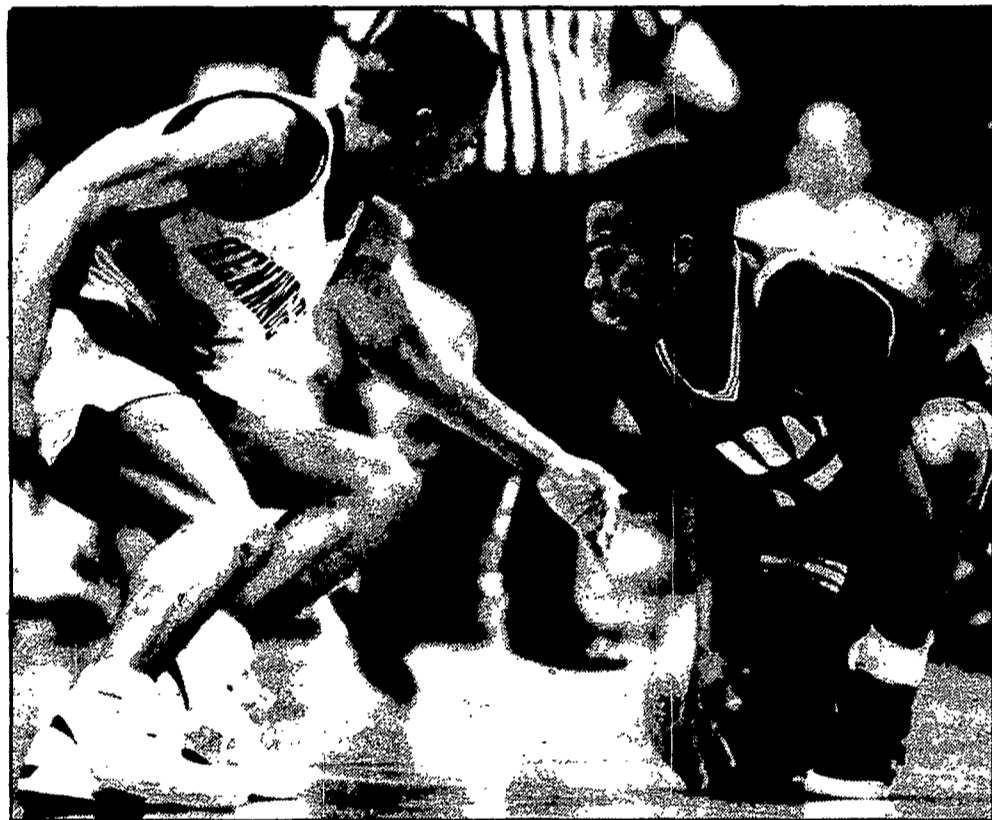
The Knights kept pouring it on as another Naylon layup and a McKinney free throw kept the McQuaid lead at nine. Still, at the end of the third quarter, Henninger had trimmed the margin to five, 51-46.

Despite its inability to put Henninger away, McQuaid still looked to be in control late in the fourth quarter.

Two successive jams by McKinney



Syracuse Henninger's Mike Biles reaches to block a shot from McQuaid's Ted Naylon during the fourth quarter of the Black Knights' 67-65 win over McQuaid in the Class A state semifinals in Glens Falls March 16.



Jeff Armbrister of McQuaid regains control of a loose ball as Henninger's Kareem Stroman tries for a steal during the second quarter of the state semifinal, played in front of 3,815 fans at the Glens Falls Civic Center. The Knights finished their season with an impressive 21-3 record.

Knights developed an effective transition game later in the first quarter. Henninger's Speights and Lazarus Sims keyed the Black Knights' offensive attack in the opening eight minutes. In fact, the duo combined for all 13 of Henninger's first-quarter points.

McQuaid opened up a 15-8 lead with 1:22 remaining in the first quarter after Mike Montesano stole the ball and dished off to Ted Naylon for a layup.

But two late buckets by Sims trimmed the lead to 17-13 at the end of the quarter.

The game's momentum began to go Henninger's way halfway through the second quarter when McQuaid's Jeff Reese collected his third personal foul. An errant three-point shot by Naylon, some misses at the charity stripe and a few Henninger buckets narrowed McQuaid's margin to 23-19 four minutes before the half.

Naylon redeemed himself soon afterward with two three-point shots — one with 3:13 remaining and another with 1:18 left. But even with Naylon scoring 19 of his game-high 27 points in the first half,



McQ's Jason McKinney slam dunks the ball during the fourth quarter. The Siena-bound senior collected 18 points and 16 rebounds.

within one minute gave the Knights a 63-57 lead with three minutes to play.

But Reese left the game after collecting his fifth foul at 2:50, and things went downhill for McQuaid from there. After Naylon mishandled a pass from Montesano, McKinney collected his fourth foul with 1:26 left in the game.

All of a sudden McQuaid's lead was just one after Henninger's Mike Biles converted two foul shots to make the score 63-62. A layup by Naylon gave the Knights a little breathing room at 65-62, but the lead proved short-lived as Sims tied the game, 65-65, with a crucial three-pointer with 1:04 left.

After both teams squandered scoring opportunities, Henninger got control of the ball with 15 seconds to play and called time out. When the clock started again, Sims held the ball for 12 seconds while he fought off a tough McQ defense.

Then with little opportunity to get off a good shot, Sims passed the ball to an open Speights who iced the game-winning shot at the buzzer.

McQuaid Coach Joe Marchese said he was certain that either Sims or Speights would take the final shot.

"We didn't get out to cover the corner," Marchese said. "We just ran out of gas, what else can I say?"

The loss was a shock for the Knights, who committed a few uncharacteristic mistakes down the stretch.

"They made the shots at the end and we didn't," Marchese said.

McKinney collected 18 points and 16 rebounds for McQuaid, which was given the Region 3 Finalist Award after the game. Montesano finished with nine points. The Knights were 19-for-26 from the free-throw line.

Henninger's Sims iced 21 points, Speights had 16 points and Rich Ernestine added 12 points for the win. The Black Knights went 16-for-25 from the charity stripe.



McQuaid's Mike Montesano looks shocked after the Knights' heart-breaking defeat.

os by Babette G. Augustin